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The Story of The Hat

BY

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The Story

of The Hat





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The Story of The Hat.

“Is he of God’s making? What manner of man? Is his head worth a hat?” Query by Rosalind in Shakspeare’s “As You Like It.” Act III., Scene II.

THE first hint of hat-wearing in history occurs in the Bible. Turn to the third chapter of the book of Daniel and you will find it recorded that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, at the command of that cruel Imperialist, Nebuchadnezzar, who afterward became a beast and went to grass, were thrown into the fiery furnace, bound in “their coats, their hosen, and their hats.” They had refused to bow down in worship to the huge image of gold which the king had set up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon.

It is an interesting, yes, an inspiring story and its moral reaches fresh and

strong even to our times; for they came out of the "burning fiery furnace" all right, as all men will who do not worship gold.

In the old version of the Bible the word hats is used; but a lateral note gives turbans as a variation, and later translation gives mantles. Hence it is hardly safe, scientifically, to assume that the Hebrew historian, or myth-writer, of that far-distant date, meant exactly the kind of head-cover which we now consider and call a hat. Probably in those days the Jews wore hoods, if civilians, or helmets, if soldiers; just as their cotemporaries in Greece, Italy and Britain undoubtedly did; or they may have worn first a mantle to protect the head, as the Spanish beauty in our day uses her mantilla, and then, in due course of time, through Oriental countries, the simple mantle may easily have evolved into the turban many-folded and compact.

The hat, as we define it, distinct from

hood or cap, is a comparatively modern* creation and yet its exact origin and date of appearance are matters of grave doubt: questions unsettled and apparently so to remain. The Egyptians wore hoods or thick head-dresses, often curiously elaborate and fantastic, as can be seen to-day in the reliefs and mural paintings on their tombs and temples; but the hat proper, the head-gear of definite shape with a brim, appears to have been unknown or at least unused by them.

One would naturally imagine that in a very hot country about the first thing to suggest itself to civilized man would be a sunshade or umbrella and that this would soon modify itself into a brim or circular projection of the hood or simple head-dress. But this apparently is not the case. Dampier, the English pirate and author, in his "Voyage Round the World," published in 1697, notes that the Chinese even

* That is, in comparison with the civilization of Egypt and India.

at that late day had no hats, caps or turbans. "When they walk abroad," he says, "they carry a small umbrello wherewith they fence their heads from the sun or rain."

The first clear trace of the hat appears not among Orientals, but among the ancient Greeks* probably of the Homeric age. Certain classes of Greek citizens wore caps of cloth and leather, possibly too, of felt and the shape of these was almost identical with the fez worn still by Greeks and Arabs in cities. Artisans and sailors are represented thus on antique vases and soldiers, too, wore them under their helms. But the rich and urban Greeks, as a rule, went bareheaded and, except when a cap was adopted as the badge of some special calling, it was apparently deemed rather effeminate or, at least undignified, to go capped.

But hunters wore a hat with a brim, which the Greeks called *πέτασος*† and the

* Doubtless, also Asiatics or half so.

† Means literally "spread out."

god, Hermes, (the Mercury of the Romans) is generally figured with a hat. In a later epoch Greek youths took to sporting the petasos which is occasionally depicted



DOGSKIN HELMET
HAT WORN BY
ROMAN SOLDIERS.



PETASOS WORN BY GREEK
SOLDIERS. COPIED
FROM ANTIQUE VASE.

with a brim of irregular width and now and then with a brim turned up so that it seems the veritable antique ancestor of the cocked hat of last century such as Washington wore.

Another hat, the causia, a variation of the petasos with a band or fillet about it and long ends of ribbon flowing behind, was affected by the Macedonian Greeks;

chiefly, however, as an emblem of high rank or of sovereignty. Here it may not be unaptly remarked that the hat, through all ages, has been a sort of symbol of social superiority. A man in the Middle Ages was known by his hat, as he now is by his hatter. But Greek Art, for the reasons already given and because it usually addressed itself to the depiction of the undressed or nude, naturally gave the hat very slight consideration or representation. Possibly, the odd phrase "Mad as a hatter," originated thus; inasmuch as Greek hat-makers must have been mad because the Greeks bought so few hats and thought so little of them, either as a utility or an ornament.

With the Romans it was very much the same. A fold of the toga served the purpose of covering the head. The priesthood, however, wore skull-caps with a point sewed on, which was the mark of their trade, and the free artisans had a soft, cone-shaped cap, called pileus, as the em-

blem of their calling and condition. When a slave was freed, one of the legal ceremonies of his manumission was the putting of this pileus on his head. This, as



PETASOS WITH TURNED BRIM
TIME OF ALEXANDER.

will be readily inferred, was the origin of the "liberty cap." The shape, however, was different. A later age gave to the liberty cap its peaked top, turned or drooping forward.

In this comparatively hatless epoch of the world, the Greco-Roman, the surrounding nations wore either hard helmets in the North, or in the East and South a tall

soft cap, generally tapering, and called mitra; from which it is believed by some that the mitre of European bishops was ultimately derived. This point, however, is doubtful.

Some writers on this highly interesting theme of human head-gear do not feel sure that the art of felting which appears to be a necessary concomitant of hat-making, unless we suppose the first hats to have been plaited from straw, was known to the Greeks and Romans before the Christian Era. But there seems to be sufficient circumstantial evidence of this, although, as noted, the process was little practiced, since hats were not common or popular. The writers who hold to this doubt maintain that the art of felting was introduced into Europe by the Crusaders who, they say, found the tents of the Saracens made of compressed wool. This might be "true, too," * for it is quite

* One of the profoundest suggestions in Shakspeare's works which, by the by, are peculiarly rich in allusions

within bounds of belief that this art might have lapsed among the Greeks and Romans from non-user, especially after those nations declined into decay and then fell under the sway of Christianity.

At any rate, the Roman phrase *lana co-acta*, compressed wool, which, we know, was used for soldiers' cloaks and for the Lacedemonian "hats" must have been something exceedingly like felt. In lands where Roman Catholicism is paramount it has always been held that St. Clement—Clemens Romanus, the earliest of the Ap-

to hats and style in head-gear, is that passage, King Lear, Act V., Scene II., where the blind Gloster convinced in his own mind of the reasonableness of his own attitude toward life, and meditating suicide, yet assents to Edgar's counter argument as containing a philosophy equally true and pertinent; thus indicating that apparently contradictory sets of facts or opinions may be reconciled or have equally valid standing in the Supreme Court of the mind.

Gloster. No further, sir. A man may rot e'en here.

Edgar. What! In ill thoughts again? Men must endure
Their going hence, e'en as their coming hither:
Ripeness is all: come on!

Gloster.

And that's true, too.

ostolic Fathers, who, according to Eusebius, ruled over the Church from 91 to 101, A. D.,—was the inventor of felt.*

The fact that the Hatters' Annual Festival for centuries has been holden on the 23d of November, St. Clement's day in the Roman Catholic Calendar, shows a general acquiescence in this belief among the guild.

Whether this is to be accepted as history or not, at least it appears reasonably clear that the introduction of the hat, as a regular piece of apparel among the upper classes in Europe, is due, in no small measure, to the dignity attached to the hat by Roman Catholic dignitaries in the Middle Ages. According to an edict of the famous Bishop of Dol in the twelfth century,

* The legend is picturesque and worth, at least, a footnote. To guard his feet during a long pilgrimage the saint put carded wool on his sandals. The result of the friction plus the alternate dampness and warmth during the journey pressed this loose wool into fine, firm fabric; and, having a good understanding, the saint thereby divined how a felted cloth suitable for cloaks or hats might be made.

the canons of the Church alone were allowed to wear hats and if anybody else ventured to visit church thus arrayed, divine service was to be suspended till the intruder retired or was forcibly ejected.

Thus the hat came to figure as an ensign of honor and then of specially religious eminence; for just a hundred years later Pope Innocent IV. ordained it as the symbol of a Cardinal and bade all such wear a hat of red in all ceremonial processions. This, he said, for like many others of his line, he was of a turn poetic,* was to be "in token that they were always ready to spill their blood for Jesus Christ." It is from this that the adjective, cardinal, meaning a certain deep shade of red was derived; and, speaking of Cardinals and poets, an apt allusion in an American poem published years ago in *The Independent* comes to mind. It is in the description of a late September sylvan scene along a sluggish river and the poet says:

*The present Pope is a poet of no mean rank.

“Where Cardinal flowers, brave priests with tongues of
fire

Denounce the dulness of the shadowed stream
Whose amber partly mirrors Heaven: indeed,
E'en as our hearts, where many a vain desire
Broods o'er the bright brim, like a river-weed.”

In “Froissart's Chronicles” there is a quaint passage, touching the time in question, where he tells how the Cardinals were threatened that, unless they elected a satisfactory Pope “we woll maike your heddes reeder (redder) than your hattes.” But the scarlet color, we learn from the same Froissart and from other chroniclers, while especially emblematic of the hat clerical, was not by fashion limited to the clergy. Such of the laity as indulged in hats generally affected a hat of red which was composed of “a fine kind of haire matted thegither.”

Turning for a moment from consideration of the hat in Europe at or about this epoch to contemplation of it elsewhere, let us transcribe a couple of highly picturesque passages from Ruy Gonzales de Cla-

vija, who was Ambassador from the King of Castile to the court of Timur Beg, or Tamerlane the Great, as he is generally known: Timur, the Shepherd who became



a King! Gonzales left Seville in May, 1403, and reached Samarkand the last day of August, 1404. On the eighth of September he was presented at the Court of Timur, where he met the Ambassador of

China, the other end of the then known world and Gonzales records that Timur gave him a seat above the Chinese Ambassador—but this may be only a flamingo flight of Spanish fantasy.

“Timur Beg was seated on the ground in a portal at the entrance to a beautiful palace. Before him was a fountain which played up very high, and tossed up in its jets were some red apples. The lord (monarch) sat cross-legged, on silken embroidery amongst round pillows. He was garbed in a robe of silk, *with a high white hat* on top of which was a ruby with pearls and precious stones about it.”

Later, at a banquet and drinking-bout where the tables and the jugs were of gold and the cups were studded inside and out with emeralds, pearls and turquoises (one which Gonzales particularly fancied had a ruby “two fingers broad” in the heart of it) the Emperor’s wives were present, unveiled; which is a rare compliment to a guest among Mohammedans. Timur’s chief

wife especially attracted the Spaniard's admiring heed. He thus described her costume: "Her robe of red silk, trimmed with gold lace, was long and flowing. It had no waist and fifteen dames held up her skirts, when she walked. She wore a crested hat (head-dress) of red cloth, very tall, crusted with pearls, rubies, emeralds, etc., and embroidered with gold lace. On the top of it was a little castle on which were three very large and brilliant rubies, surmounted by a tall plume of feathers. Her very black hair—they prize black hair above all other shades—hung down over her shoulders. She was followed by about three hundred ladies, and when she sat, three held her head-dress, lest it topple to one side."

Timur's three other wives—Mohammedans and Americans in our Sultanate of Sulu can have four by law—to his credit be it said, were gowned and hatted with equal gorgeousness, and to amuse his guests Timur ran his fourteen favorite elephants

against horses and professional human runners which was a "diverting spectacle."

Let us pause a moment now to inquire into the origin and radical significance of the word hat. Scholars are one that it comes from an Anglo-Saxon word, *haet*, meaning a covering for the head or, in fact, a hood, which, throughout the Middle Ages, was the popular wear, but since the fifteenth century has been out of use, except in some very primitive out-of-the-way corners. In tongues akin to the Anglo-Saxon the word is similar; German, *hüten* and *hut*; Swedish, *hatt*; Danish, *hoed*; Dutch, *hoeden*; all with the underlying idea of a guard or protection. A thimble, for example, in German is called a *fingerhut*—a finger-hat; because it fends the finger from a needle prick. Horne Tooke attempts to derive the word from "*hoved*," the past participle of the verb, *heave* or *heaf-an*, which would thus make hat mean a thing heaved or raised, as the head is on the shoulders. This, then, if a correct sur-

mise, would class hat and head and hood and hut as words of exactly similar origin and primary meaning.

And here, though this little book is concerned chiefly with the evolution and history of the hat, it seems well to say a few words on the hood, the hat's forerunner. Hoods of skin and leather were worn in Northern Europe so far back before the Roman Conquest of Gaul and Britain, that no date can be even guessed as to their be-



HOOD WORN IN BRITAIN
TIME OF CÆSAR



HAT OF PLEATED CLOTH
TIME OF HENRY I.

ginning. Sometimes, probably most often at first, they were independent, but frequently they were attached to a cloak or cape. In the Middle Ages this was the distinctive badge of artisans and workers

in the field, of the toiling and moiling millions. In some regions, warm ones, doubtless, as a rule, this head-cover was little and of light stuff, a mere cap; but elsewhere it was so large and heavy as to seem cumbersome and look outlandish.

This latter which that great authority on costume, Mr. Sturgis, thinks was the hood proper, or *chaperon*, (chaperones, nowadays, are often equally cumbersome and outlandish) in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had a cape reaching to the elbows and closing in front, so that the face peeped out through a slit and the wearer looked not unlike an Esquimaux or Arctic explorer of the present day. But there was more than one style to the hood-cape. The cape-part was twisted sometimes into a tippet and wound about the hood turban-wise and at one period the hood was made prodigiously tall like the hat of Timur Beg's chief wife, described previously. Under these hoods a close cap had to be worn, if the wearer wished to keep the hair smooth.

It is easy to understand why the hood held out so long against the hat as an article of common use in Europe. The hood could be made with ease in the huts of the poor: the hat demanded a skilled labor. So the hat during that period was the outward and visible sign of a person of higher class or of wealth; one who rode, not walked; one who could travel.

Perhaps the most curious hat of this



THE BYCOCKET.

epoch, in the way of shape is the by-cocket, of which an illustration is presented; but, though fantastic, isn't it rather picturesque? In the fifteenth century the women's hats,

among the upper classes, were extraordinary affairs which must have devolved upon their wearers an almost crushing sense of responsibility ; but in the succeeding century taste became less fantastic, more simple, more refined.

Although it is recorded that near the middle of the twelfth century a "hatte of biever was worn by one of the nobles of the lande mett at Clarendon" (clearly it was regarded as an eccentricity or curiosity) and although Froissart refers to the hats and plumes worn at King Edward's Court in 1340, when the Order of the Garter was ordained, yet the mass of evidence goes to show that even at the beginning of 1400 in Western Europe the hat was chiefly used by men ; and by them chiefly, out riding. When Charles the VII. of France, styled the Victorious, who had redeemed his country from the grasp of the greedy English, entered Rouen in triumph, 1449, "he had on a hat lined with red velvet," says the historian, "sur-

mounted with a plume or tuft of feathers and under his reign the use of hats and caps is to be dated, which henceforward



COMMON MEN'S HATS IN TWELFTH CENTURY.

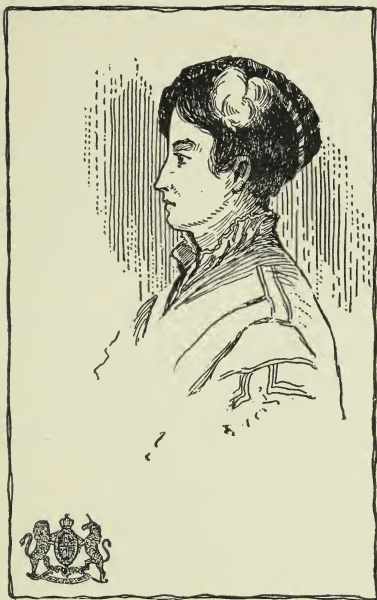
began to take the place of chaperons and hoods."

The importance of the hat officially is noteworthy through all that transition period and in the succeeding century. Among the privy-purse expenses of Henry VIII., one of England's most typical kings and Englishmen, is an entry, 1520. "Peid for a hatte and plume for the King, in Boleyn," (not Anne Boleyn, but the town of Boulogne, old spelling) "twenty-five shillings." And in the diary of King Henry's Secretary is a note of a "Scarlett

beever hatte" presented to the King on New Year's day, 1543; possibly a complimentary hint by virtue of its cardinal color that he was accounted indeed, what he had decreed himself, the religious as well as political head of all England. They knew how to pay neat compliments in those bad old days, compliments that went right to the head and heart, like wine or a fine brand of hat.

Speaking of Cardinals, in Wolsey's inventory, when he resigned the Great Seal to that still mightier and nobler Catholic, one of the noblest men who ever lived, Sir Thomas More, there are five hats mentioned. It would seem curious nowadays if Mr. Croker should be forced to resign the rule of New York to Mr. Platt for a brief period, to have him give up five hats or even one, except on an election bet. Yet, no doubt, his official hat would fit Platt perfectly.

At this very scarlet period in England's official history, when heads went to the



MUFFIN CAP WORN BY EDWARD VI.,
SON OF HENRY VIII., COPIED FROM
HANS HOLBEIN'S FAMOUS PICTURE.

block about as often as hats, a wonderful variety in fashions prevailed. Hats were of various shapes both as to brim and

crown, though the majority of brims ran to breadth, "sometimes narrowing a little toward the back and a little bent up and scooped in front," says one authority. So fantastical the fashions again became toward the middle of the sixteenth century that one Master Stubb, a satirist, in his "Anatomie of Abuses," published 1585, dilated as follows:

"Sometimes they use them sharpe on the crown of their heads; some more, some lesse, as please the fantasies of their inconstant mindes. Other some be flat and broad, sometimes on the crowne like the battlements of a house. Another sorte have rounde crownes, sometimes with one kind of bande, sometimes with another, now black, now white, now russed, now redde, now greene, now yellow, now this, now that; never content with one color or fashion two daies to an end. And as the fashions be rare and strange, so is the stuff, whereof their hattes be made, divers also; for some are silk, some of velvet, some of

taffetie, some of a certain kinde of fine haire; these they call bever hattes, of xx, xxx, xl shillings price, fetched from beyond the seas, from whence a great sort of other varieties doe come besides; and so common a thing it is, that every serving man, councieman, and other, even all indifferently doe weare of these hattes."

Whether the satiric flings of Stubb and other writers, who very likely were envious, because they couldn't afford more than one hat per lifetime, and so had to talk through it at everything in sight, effected any speedy modification in the taste of hat-wearers or hatters, is open to much doubt. But through the seventeenth century, in England at least, fashion in men's hats grew soberer and at the beginning of 1700, the crowns of hats, which were mostly round, were made much lower than before. Possibly men had grown weary of wearing felt and fur steeples, which must have made short persons frequently look ridiculous or as if under an extinguisher. Then,

too, wig-wearing necessarily caused a corresponding change in the style of head-gear. But after the crowns had been cut down the brims yet remained for a while disproportionally broad, not unlike those of what are now called Quaker hats, until the cumbrous protrusiveness, possibly, suggested to some man of fashion the idea of turning the flap up and pinning it back in front. This was quickly followed by another dandy, who went the first reformer "one better" by turning up another flap and this led to a third turn, so that in 1704 the three-cocked hat, a very dashing, picturesque thing, became the correct style. Plumes and tufts continued still to be worn by a few men, but they gradually gave way—*place aux dames*, as it were—till the term, fuss and feathers, became applicable to the head-dress and temper of one sex alone.

A curious point of commercial history may perhaps be rightly noted here in passing. The *Gentlemen's Magazine* for 1743

states that Cardinals' hats were then made in Great Britain. Considering that England had become a pretty thoroughly Protestant country at that time, this proves what a long stride she had even then taken toward her long manufacturing supremacy, when a comparatively small item of commerce like this and one with contrary religious associations could be included in her industries.

Toward the latter half of that century, a round-edged, flat-bottomed and full-brimmed hat came into vogue and common use, and the cocked-hat as a popular thing was "knocked into a cocked-hat." It lingered chiefly as a mark of rank, real or pretentious, and as the sign of a soldier; and in the last quarter of the eighteenth century a close approach among men of fashion to the style prevalent at present took place. One writer says that in London during the last decade of 1700 a cocked-hat was a very rare sight.

At various periods in the history of the

hat, as worn by men, who have always been, by the by, just about as *brim*-full of vanity as women, all sorts of adornments have been superimposed on the head-gear. Badges, gold-bands, and silver cords—mark to-day the Mexican greaser's sombrero!—loops, rosettes, plumes, jewels even, have gleamed, flared or flaunted in evidence. In an old poem satirizing the Puritan, who was ostentatiously plain in his garb, for the servile, commercial civility he was believed to possess preëminently, occurs this keen and striking passage.

“ Oh ! monstrous, superstitious Puritan,
Of refined ways, yet ceremonial man,
Who, when thou meet'st one, with inquiring eyes
Dost search ; and, like a needy broker, prize *
The silk and gold he wears, and to that rate,
So high or low, dost raise the formal hat.”

But among highly civilized peoples gew-gaws are no longer worn by average men on their hats. Metal bands, loops, and

* “ Prize ” here means to appraise.



MEN'S HATS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

tassels, to be sure, are still used in the world's armies and navies to some extent, as designations to the eye of the rank of the wearer, and serving-men in livery still are marked in this way. A contrast of the extremes meets here, just as in apparel otherwise among men; the waiter and the gentleman at evening ease being both garbed in a dress-suit; which occasionally at entertainments has been productive of confusion and double-sided embarrassment. This reminds me of an anecdote. The well-known wit, Edgar A. Jones, once requested a man at some party in England to bring him an ice or a light or something. "Damn you, sir, do you take me for a waiter or a gentleman?" was the roared reply. Jones put his monocle to his eye, coolly surveyed the savage Briton, who was about twice his size, up and down for a moment and then in suavest tones delivered this caustic rebuke: "Pardon me for my tremendous error. I see now that you are neither, and must be neuter. No

waiter could wear such an ill-fitting coat: no gentleman be so ill-natured as not to smile at a natural mistake and try to relieve another from the embarrassment of a blunder." The barbarian was on the point of striking his rebuker, when some one twitched him by the sleeve, saying: "That's Jones, the Joker. Don't make a sanguinary ass of yourself, old man." Then he made a bovine effort to grin and apologize; but Jones confused him completely by saying: "Not a word, not a word, I beg of you. Accidents will happen in the best regulated Sunday-schools. Don't mention it, my dear young man, but don't let it occur again!" and then he put everybody at ease by telling an amusing story about a bibulous fellow who walked off with his hat and left him a better one where he found several bank-notes hidden in the sweat-band.

One anecdote leads to another and of the many relating to hats as pleasant as any is that which the celebrated English

hatter, Henry Melton, still green and joyous in his easy eighties, tells on himself and how it determined him to become the greatest hatter in the United Kingdom, as he certainly was—a veritable artist in his business.

One spring morning in youth, while he was sauntering along the gay green fields of Battersea, full of rebellion at the idea of his father putting him into business, for which he had an aversion, he was startled from his rambling revery by a loud, mocking voice on the other side of the hedge which cried out: “What a shocking, shocking bad hat!” Looking about and over the hedge and seeing no one but a professional bird-catcher with an array of cages and traps, young Melton ruefully concluded the rude criticism must be aimed at him and accordingly took off his beaver to see what was wrong with it. Immaculate it seemed as when it came from its band-box. He stared at his rustic critic who grinned hugely in return and then,

dismissing his irritation, the youth rambled on. Toward evening, however, in two other places he was greeted with the same remark which made him uncomfortably suspicious of presenting a shabby appearance and served to fix his mind permanently on the hat *per se* as an eminently important part of a gentleman's attire. Ergo, Melton became a hatter and in his day probably made more hats for royal heads and for men of note than any man before or since. Afterward, however, he found out, much to his amusement and satisfaction, that the expression which had so upset his juvenile jauntiness was only one of those peculiar jests which every now and then pervade a community, as for instance in the eighties—"What! Never?" "Well, hardly ever," from Pinafore; or that equally popular query: "Is this hot enough for you?" And the origin of that salute caustic of the hat he found very odd. But that is another anecdote. It appears that just a little

while before in that locality, Southwark, the candidate elected (they call it "returned" in the English lingo) was the famous reformer, Mr. Wilson, a hat manufacturer, who afterward became an acknowledged statesman and died in India, while engaged in putting the finances of that country on a safe footing.

This Mr. Wilson had in his employ as a political canvasser at that time another hatter, Mr. Franks, who, by the by, deserves more than "honorable mention" for his philanthropic and successful labors in calling the heed of his country to the cruelties in the coal-mines of Cornwall and the practical enslavement of women and little children.* Now this Mr. Franks was then rather a smooth politician and in canvassing votes for his friend Wilson (it would never do of course for a Reformer to offer a bribe for a vote) he used to say to each elector, when he called at the

* If curious on this theme, get a book entitled "The White Slaves of England," from any first-class library.

house: "Dear me! What a shocking, shocking bad hat you have there! Pray permit me to send you one." Your true Briton has many faults, but he likes frankness; indeed, he has far greater respect for the man who abuses him than for the fulsome flatterer. Mr. Franks' frankness and his little attention in the way of sending a new hat "caught on" and his principal, Mr. Wilson, was triumphantly "returned." But this politician trick naturally was denounced by the losing side and so it became a common joke. Men greeted each other with "What a shocking, shocking bad hat," and, if they were acquaintances, the man on whom the salute was inflicted had to "stand treat." Extremes meet. "How's your poor feet?" was another familiar address, by-word or "catch" in England not long after and this arose from the inquiry of the riflemen to each other after the cruelly long marching and counter-marching of the first Brighton Review. This grew into "a universal and

most surprising sympathy," according to one writer, with everybody's pedal extremities throughout the entirety of the United Kingdom, so that men finally headed it off by saying, when they met: "Oh! they're all right. How's yours?"

These little stories have side-tracked us a trifle, but not much, from our main line. Yet, in fact, when writing on this topic, it is rather hard to avoid lapsing into one's anecdotage; such a multitude of pat stories present themselves.

The hat that has held its own most markedly, since hats became popular, is unquestionably the beaver. It has undergone many mutations and had many names, but its general shape, beauty and utility have persisted—a survival of the fittest,—unmoved by abuse, and rising above ridicule. Many nicknames have been fastened upon it, cylinder, funnel, stove-pipe, plug,—it has triumphed over all and still to-day holds the fort—or the



Alfred V. Gray

head. There is cause for this ; more than one cause. In the first place this hat, if properly made, is the least irritating to the scalp by reason of the ventilation it allows. Secondly, though not primarily cheap, when made by a good hatter, it wears well ; holds its form and style and stands re-blocking. Thirdly, it is more generally becoming than other hats. And here it is well to say that an artistic hatter, if he enjoys the confidence of his customer, ought to tell that customer when any special style of hat misbecomes the head or figure. There are some who never ought to wear beavers and some very short and rotund men on whom flat hats look ridiculous. To hit the happy medium, when one is at all out of the ordinary or average in appearance, is a very delicate matter and the hatter should study this point for his regular customer who may not have the time or taste to evolve it for himself.

The style of the present high hat is

derived from that worn by the famous Earl of Essex, favorite of Queen Bess, who was the first to trim the heavy brim of his all-around flapping beaver, raise the crown, and give it the air of elegance and distinction which it has never lost, but gained upon through the years. Sir Walter Raleigh adopted this and by force of his fame made it even more fashionable. Since then this hat has had many adventures made upon it in the way of shape and material of composition, as the illustrations will sufficiently indicate, but, if the permanence of the "type" be a proof of original excellence in hats, as in animals, following out the theory of Darwin, it is clear that this kind of hat came to stay.

In regard to width or turn of brim, as in slope or curvature or height of crown, there have been countless, sometimes almost playful, variations of fancy ; but, in due course of time, by some man of fashion or prince, his Royal Highness of

Wales, for example, the hat has been quietly brought back to affinity with its primal type. "Hats will throw back," remarked Melton, "as well as race-horses or greyhounds," and he who went down to Deptford to see Raleigh embark on his caravel for that last brave adventure to the Spanish Main—now no longer Spanish—might, had he had the gift of Methuselah, have seen, two centuries afterward, that "glass of fashion and mould of form" the delightful Count d'Orsay caracoling down Rotten Row, crowned with a hat of almost identical shape with Raleigh's. This Count d'Orsay, who for years was the setter of all fashions in England and who, Lord Byron said, was the only thoroughly joyous and genial dandy he ever knew, was more particular about the style of his hats than any other article of his apparel.

The Count gave as reason for this that the hat is the crown of a man's appearance. His hats varied in size to suit his coats. If he wore a light, short riding-coat, his hat

would be smaller in all ways than with a thick overcoat, as, for instance, with the sealskin coat of which he was the introducer, if not the inventor, and which has been generally discarded since then by men and taken up by the fair sex in jacket forms. The Count also held that a hat should correspond to the height of the wearer. "A short man in a high hat is out of proportion," he used to say. "It dwarfs him, just as long hair does a lady who is *petite*." D'Orsay never had less than fourteen hats at hand for use and often as many as forty. The hat in the illustration of this famous personage, an illustration made originally from Grant's magnificent picture, was noticeable for the thick, ribbed, broad silk binding and a band tied in a rather large bow, the place of which was a matter of moment with its wearer who held that the location and set of the bow gave "chic" * to the whole hat. This beau of England's

*It was d'Orsay, I believe, who introduced this word into our language.

palmiest days, who was of commanding height and fine proportions, always wore his hat at a very slight angle to give an air of gayety, but never of jauntiness. His imitators, the Earls of Pembroke and Chesterfield and a host of lesser lights, carried this inclination to a ridiculous excess and got themselves properly caricatured in the comic prints. But there was a rival faction of fashion in England at that epoch, led by the Marquis of Anglesea, popularly nicknamed "The Magnificent," and "True Blue." The hat named for him, still seen in remote districts of the United Kingdom, was particularly bell-shaped in the crown and the brim was perfectly flat. This was a favorite style at one time in this country and was called "the bell-topper." It is still in use on the stage to give an air of quaintness to the parts of old country gentlemen. It is said, however to have fitted the bearing of Anglesea himself and to have added to, not detracted from, the

dignity which was his chief characteristic.

Another odder hat once popular was that invented by the eccentric Earl of Harrington. This amusing fellow as-



WELLINGTON.



ANGLESEA.



HARRINGTON.

tonished his hatter by his method of testing the quality and endurance of his hats. He stood on them, and if they stood this treatment without a dent he pronounced them fit for his head. As they were made of the finest quality of beaver, costing about twenty-five dollars apiece and weighing never less than twenty and one-half ounces they were generally up to his requirements. It will be noticed that they

were remarkable for their extreme yeoman-shaped crown and square-cut brim, turned up severely at the sides.

Another of Harrington's eccentricities—fads we should term them now—was his insistence on differences of color to suit different occasions. Many odd stories are told of him, of which this is, perhaps, the best.

A friend who called was taken out to his garden where the Earl was pensively strutting about, crowned with a sage-green hat. Surprised at this, the friend asked why he wore such an outlandish color. "To be in harmony with the trees and thus not frighten the birds," was the Earl's grave reply. After this, who shall say that the English are not a very humorous people—unintentionally? There is, however, an excellent explanation given for Harrington's insistence on the stiffness and solidity of his hats. The Earl in youth had been like Nimrod "a mighty hunter" and once had been flung head

foremost on a rock. The hard hat he happened to be wearing had acted as a buffer and saved his skull from fracture. Hence his lifelong devotion to it. Up to that time the hard hat, which was cheaper, had been considered as vulgar—a shining show, fit only for grooms or post-boys. Its vogue is believed to have dated from Harrington's preference.

In this connection may be added an interesting anecdote communicated to me by Richard Knight, author of that most delightful and original of modern detective tales, "The Haunted Hat." An elderly German named Cullman, who got a grant of Alabama land and from whom Cullman County, Alabama, is named, founded a German colony there, which, when Mr. Knight visited the place in 1883, was a model town with no saloons, two churches, a bucket-factory, only one American and one negro, and not one poor or discontented man. Cullman, when he started his colony, was looked upon with

dislike by some of the neighboring "poor white trash," as the negroes call them, and one day a huge, hulking fellow picked a quarrel with the old German and stabbed at him downward with a bowie-knife. The hard high hat worn by the intended victim deflected the murderous blow and it only chipped out a V-shaped piece of Cullman's frontal bone, missing the kind old brain. The assassin fled the country; but Cullman kept the piece of bone and, when familiar with a visitor, used to take it out of a silver snuff-box and, while telling how his hat had saved his life, would playfully fit the fragment into the deep dent that slightly disfigured his fine, philanthropic forehead.

Another style of hat which contended for popularity with the d'Orsay, the Anglesea, and the Harrington, was the Wellington, named for the famous "Iron Duke" who, with Prussian help, defeated the Great Napoleon at Waterloo. This was rather a mean between the extremes

of the others, moderately straight in the crown and, though curved up rather smartly on the sides of the brim, not of sufficiently aggressive appearance to look



GENERAL WOLFE.

eccentric. When the Prince of Wales began to take a hand in the direction of the fashions, he first set the seal of his ap-

proval on a hat straighter in crown than the Wellington and but slightly curved in the brim. It was a much lighter and more juvenile style than had ever been worn in England, but the brevity of its brim gave it an air of levity, when above round or fat faces, and it cannot be compared for elegance of proportions and average fitness to the styles in prevalence recently. Mention of the Wellington recalls the curious fact that Napoleon, unlike most great commanders, was notoriously careless about the appearance of his head-gear. A hat of his that used to be on exhibit as a relic in the Louvre was a thing of no quality, shape or comeliness, an outlandish peasant-sort of slouch. But while he was this way in dress, the bills incurred by his wife, Josephine, are said to have more than struck a high average.

Great soldiers, as a rule, have been rather noted for their hats. Alexander is represented as having his "billy-cock" or petasus, turned up jauntily at the brim

and young Caracalla, the Roman dandy Emperor, was joked about a good deal—on the quiet—for imitating the Alexandrine cock in his hat as well as the conqueror strut in his walk. Among the dandies of those days the hat was clearly regarded



ARM-HAT HELD IN HAND BY LOUIS XIV., OF FRANCE,
AT HIS MEETING WITH PHILIP IV., OF SPAIN, 1660.

more as an ornament than a utility, for we find it noted as a custom that on returning from a ball or entertainment the Roman youths wore their hats and bore their slippers on their arms, just as country-girls in England, France and very old settlements in America may be still occasionally seen carrying their shoes to church and donning them at the door.

The *chapeau bras*, or arm-hat, a curious

fashion, probably a revival of the Roman one just in allusion, was for a while rampant in England and as recently as 1860 was not uncommon in some parts of Europe. Melton records that he found its use lingering among some elderly beaux in his time and that he himself made one of velvet, lined with white satin, for the Prince Consort who used it at parties. It is also told that at the funeral of the Duke of York, where several of the aged Bishops and peers in attendance caught colds resulting in sudden death, the celebrated Lord Eldon* saved his own life and that of King William by shrewdly setting the example of using the velvet hat

* Eldon, the law-lord, bitterly immortalized in Shelley's "Masque of Anarchy."

"I met Fraud and he had on,
Like Lord Eldon, an ermine gown.
His big tears, for he wept well,
Turned to mill-stones, as they fell.
And the little children who,
Round his feet, played to and fro,
Thinking every tear a gem,
Had their brains knocked out by them."

he carried in hand as Lord Chancellor for a foot-mat ; thus keeping his feet warm in the long stand upon chilly stones in the bleak Abbey.

The odd uses to which men have put hats have been partially noted, and it is in order to consider the especial honor in which this part of the apparel is held. Symbol of devotion unto death and of lofty rank, it becomes the distinctive badge of the Cardinals, the Great Princes of the Catholic Church. Mark of letters, the trencher of the collegian and the ensign of finished learning, as in the case of the Master of Arts, it stands for the culture of the mind as well as the heavenward aspiration of the spirit. Sign among the Romans of the raising of a serf to the status of a citizen, in its humbler form of cap, it offers itself as an easily understood and accepted token of the march of practical progress ; in a word, the evolution of the Brotherhood of Man. As an expression of reverence in religious matters the hat cuts a fig-

ure both ways; the Christian doffs his hat, the Jew puts his on, in their respective churches and synagogues—Temples to the Same and One Maker! The Quaker follows the Jew's example. The ancient pagan priests of Greece and Rome wore a head-dress, when officiating. The soldier salutes by touching the hat, and among civilians respect used to be graded in the intercourse of men with each other by raising the hand toward the brim, by touching it with the forefinger or with all fingers, by tipping it forward slightly, by lifting it a couple of inches, by taking it off,* by lowering it, by almost sweeping the ground with it to imply profound respect. In Spain, poor old erroneous, ceremonious Spain, the hat has been often an

* A charming anecdote is told of Jefferson. He was riding along with a somewhat consequential companion, when they happened to meet an old negro, who doffed his hat at once. Jefferson gravely uncovered in return and wished the fellow good-day. "I am surprised," said the great man's companion, "that you take off your hat to a slave." "Would you have me then his inferior in politeness?"

essential mark of distinction according to the quality of its texture, the shape and the incidental ornamentation. So much a thing of honor is it that in many houses, on visiting, one finds a chair set apart especially for the hat to sit on.

But the hat has been made to convey disrespect also. When in 1866 a certain society in Charleston, S. C., sent the Editor of the New York *Tribune*, Horace Greeley, a personage noted for the uncomeliness of his head-gear, a gift of a hat, it was meant to hint that he needed something new "to talk through," on the subject of Southern outrages. It was one way of calling the sage a voluminous, long-distance liar. By law in Italy and France, even so late as the reign of Louis XIV., the hat was made into an insulting symbol of race-difference and a tab of degradation; Jews were commanded to wear yellow hats and insolvent Jews, green hats. Perhaps here was where the French poet, Baudelaire, got his idea of dyeing his hair green to surprise his

friends. He was certainly insolvent of brains, when he did so.

One of the first patents * taken out for hats used by the gentry was that of Melton, I believe, for a Reversible Shooting, Fishing and Traveling Hat. This, of which illustrations are given, combined a cool and porous head-cover on a hot day, and a waterproof one in wet weather. Fig. 1 shows the hat in dry weather, made of cloth or tweed and ventilating. In event of rain the double rim at the edge of the black brim may be reversed and when it is brought over to the front, the hat is completely covered with japanned waterproofing. Figure 2 shows this cover about three-fourths turned so that the reversible part may be seen. This was instantly patronized by the Prince Consort and gained vogue among sportsmen and others much out in the open air.

* Many patents were taken out in France and England for waterproof hats, chiefly for use by sailors and porters. Dunnage of London, in 1794, got one for waterproof beavers, and in 1802 Overbury and Jepsin took out others.

The derby is a modern hat which owes its vogue likewise to the same princely hat-fancier, and shortly after these came into general favor, his Royal Highness intro-



I



II

duced the innovation of having hats of this kind covered with the same plaid as his various hunting garbs, and these made a great hit among the sporting fraternity of England, Scotland and Wales. In these hats, however, the true derby shape was modified by a slight flattening at top of the crown.

During the sixties a sharp discussion was begun in the press and has been revived periodically as to the existing—and persisting—cylindrical form of the high hat. Artists, particularly, who have plunged into the controversy, generally have reviled this form as lacking in pictur-

esqueness. But the question holds firm whether picturesqueness is the sole object to be aimed at—especially in masculine attire. Is it not clear that the modern tendency is toward what is unpretentious, easy and comfortable, rather than what is picturesque and cumbrous? What makes fashions change? Is it mere whim of the public, or artful intrigue and subtle suggestion on the part of merchants? Is it not rather some point of utility as well as elegance that suggests, or leads up to, the change? The bicycle is invented; youth and age of both sexes are attracted by the combination of healthful exercise and play which the machine offers. What results? A return on the part of the male to something like the costume of last century—short trunks and long socks; and on the part of the female to an abbreviated skirt, a more easy fitting shoe and more consideration as to color and texture of hose.

The funnel-shaped hat, which has triumphed over that most potent of de-

stroyers, Ridicule, has a reason to account for its triumph. It is the best of ventilators. The cause of so much baldness among our ancestors, that made wig-wearing the fashion, was undoubtedly the



TIME OF CHARLES II.

cumbrous head-gear which, causing irritation of the scalp, had produced a race of baldicoots. Another point. The black funnel hat is more in keeping with our dress than the plumed hat of the time of Charles II. Think how absurd a man in black frock and grey trowsers would look, if he topped his toilet with a hat like this.

Charles Dickens, in his magazine, *All the Year Round*, inveighed earnestly against the "tile." "What Fiji," he says, "would wear our black hat? What aboriginal would not dance on it in sheer disgustful contempt? It is costly, frail, lets in the rain, does not keep out the sun," (very narrow brims were then in vogue) "attracts the wind, is unfit to travel or to sleep in" (he must have been thinking of nightcaps and going to bed with his boots on) "is ugly, uncomfortable, cold; yet it has existed now in full fashion for some seventy years and it defies all reformation. Stupid type of Chinese changelessness that it is, it has spread all over Europe and reigns predominant wherever there is civilization."

A bright indictment this; but analysis dims it. In the first place, the high hat is not an expensive article of one's dress and was not, when he wrote. Its cost in a year will be found considerably less than that of any other part. Second, its fragil-

ity is entirely optional. It can be made strong as tin or so light as to weigh only two ounces. Third, it doesn't let in the rain, does keep off the sun and, when the brim is made wide enough, protects the vision. Its height may attract the wind, but its rotundity breaks the force of it;



TWELFTH CENTURY FASHIONS.

and its value, in the way of ventilation, what critic can deny? As for coldness, of course, in deep winter, it is not as warming to the head as a fur cap; that can be admitted, but as to its being uncomfort-

able, that is the fault of one's hatter—simply and solely a culpable carelessness in the fit. If a hat is well fitted, a man doesn't know he has it on till he takes it off, as the Irishman says in his "bully" fashion. The fact of its general adoption and long reign—it is now centennial—would seem to be a fair proof of its general advantages and merits.

No, dear Dickens, you were a great and splendid writer, and you righted not a few wrongs in your day, but you were not infallible. Your tilt against the high hat was a repetition of Don Quixote's assault on the wind-mills, and your indictment, as to substance of sound sense, reminds one of Phelim's dinner. "What have ye for dinner to-day, O'Brien?" "Boiled beef and purtaties, Phelim." "Ah—just me own dinner, *barrin' the beef*."

Would any of the "artistic" denouncers of the "chimney pot" like to have us go back to the flaunting foolscap pomposities

of the twelfth century such as those examples on page 63 from Repton's Tapestries?

Or perhaps, a flaring yellow sugar-loaf, tricked off with sky-blue trimmings like that of the time of Edward the IV., would



YELLOW SUGARLOAF.



ANOTHER OF SAME TIME.

tickle the fancy of our artist friends. Imagine our court-jester, Mr. Chauncey Depew, under a foolscap extinguisher of this kind or of the companion hat with its long suggestive goose-quill.

Or consider the napkin hats, which had a run in the fifteenth century.

Would even our waiters care to be marked as a class by such uncouth and ultra-comical head-gear? Or the muffin caps and hats of the reign of Edward VI., or the "flat-heads and half muffins" which were worn in the hazy, half-chaotic sixteenth century—who votes for them?

One is inclined to think that here was a reversion of type to the buttoned bonnets mentioned by the great narrative poet, Chaucer.

"His stature was not very tall.
Lean he was. His legs were small,
Hoséd with a stocken red;
A buttoned bonnet on his head."

In that same century the battle between hats, (chiefly of beaver,) and caps, which has long since ended in a victory for the blocked hat, appears to have begun. These by virtue of superior comfort and adaptation to climate have held the field, with variations of shape, until foreign influence,

Highland shooting, and a general loosening of costume, due possibly to the rapidly increasing attendance upon and interest in collegiate races, restored to common use the comic expansion of the “billy-cock”—



NAPKIN HATS FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

the pileus (cap) of the ancients, and the navy’s “wide-awake.” *

The “wide-awake” is only a modern form of the petasus of the Greeks or an amplification of the pileus. This was fol-

* It seems to be a fact, although savoring of joke, that the “wide-awake” was thus named, because it never had a nap.

lowed by the invention of the boating-hat of straw; the turban, or "pork-pie," now entirely lapsed from fashion; the fishing-cap with solid brim and flexible head-case and finally the close round-crowned felt, or derby, which is only a revival, after all, of a hat current in the twelfth century, as the illustrations on page 25, from a manuscript in the Cambridge Library clearly show.

Reference has been made to Sir Walter Raleigh, one of England's greatest characters, as an early wearer, if not actual originator, of the style of beaver, chiefly affected by Count d'Orsay two odd centuries after.

It appears that Sir Walter brought over from the Low Countries the idea of blocking or shaping firmly the hat, which was a European, not an English, invention. Indeed, it is noticeable that the English are not an inventive, but an adoptive race, quick to seize, and sometimes to improve upon others' ideas, just as they are quick

to seize others' lands, when they dare or can. Wordsworth's Rob Roy fits the case historically.

“ The good old rule sufficeth him,
The good old rule, the simple plan:
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep, who can.’

But an even greater, and far more typical Englishman than Raleigh, had pre-



FRENCH EIFFEL TOWER
HAT OF 14TH CENTURY.



THE PORKPIE. A REVIVAL
OF THE FEZ IN FORM.

viously gone across the Channel for his hats. That royal lady-killer, Henry VIII., whom Froude makes out a great statesman, in his youthful days, like the present heir to the English throne, was as partic-

ular about his hats as his heart-affairs. One of his foreign hats has been subject of allusion earlier in this history and the only thing to be added is that, probably, it was not a blocked beaver, though it may have been. Opposite is a specimen of the shaggy and shapeless beaver in use about a century before King Henry cut off his wives' heads and founded a national church on the purely legal right of divorce.

But the beaver hat (or cap) dates even further back than this most frank and honest period of English history; for in the chronicles of the Abbey of Mandeville mention is made in monkish and very bad Latin of certain gifts to the Abbot in 883 A. D. among which are two Roman caps, one (*ex cane Pontico*) from the dog of the Pontic Sea, *i. e.*, the barking seal; the other of beaver, trimmed with other furs. Henry III. of England, in his long reign of peace, had a little cap of beaver, with gold band and set with precious stones—doubtless, a gem of a cap in those days.

The Low Countries were at that time the seat of hat-manufacture. Chaucer, the charming poet, from whom quotation has previously been made, describes the merchant—in those days generally his own



SHAGGY UNBLOCKED BEAVER
OF 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES.

drummer or traveler—as having on his head a “Flaundries (Flanders) beaver hat.” In “Much Ado About Nothing” Shakespeare puts this into Claudio’s mouth; “He brushes his hat o’ mornings; what does that bode?” That he was a gentleman particular about his looks, of course, but also doubtless that his hat was of beaver and needed smoothing.

The blocked beaver, championed by

Raleigh, made such head-way in popular regard that Queen Bess felt constrained to pass an Act for the protection of the "thrummed" cap trade, which manufacture, originally started by some fugitives from Flanders in the time of the Fourth Edward, had assumed large proportions. In this protection of established industries the chief element of consideration, however, was probably not so much the cap-trade, *per se*, as the native wool-grower; who, as a landed proprietor, would naturally be an object of solicitude to a paternal semi-feudal government. This act, 13 Elizabeth c. 19, was passed in 1571, and it ordered that every person, save ladies, Jews, etc., on Sundays and holidays—there were many of the latter, then, for it was still Merrie Englande—should wear a cap of velvet wool, *made in England* by the cappers, under a penalty of three shillings and sixpence per day. This curious tax was repealed by 39 Elizabeth c. 18. The hat had begun to win its long fight.

Its price, however, continued high and so confined its use for a century chiefly to the upper circles.

In the time of Charles II., 1668, date also of the Great Fire of London, it is quaintly recorded that one Giles Davis, a merchant, offered Timothy Wade, a gentleman, five pounds to buy a beaver hat so as to induce him to surrender a lease to a certain piece of ground. This costliness naturally caused imitation and substitution of inferior fur and thus led in a few years to a lowering of price.

A History of Trade, published in 1702, contains this instructive passage: "About this time we suffered a great herd of French tradesmen to come in, *particularly hat-makers*, who brought the fashion of making a slight coarse-woven commodity—viz—felt hats, now called Carolinas; a very inferior article to beaver, which then sold at from twenty-four to forty-eight shillings apiece."

Thirty years later we find the London

Board of Trade in behalf of London hatters complaining bitterly to the House of Commons about the extent of hat-making in New York and New England. In conjunction and contrast with the curious attempt by Elizabeth to protect English hat-makers from foreign competition is the fact that about 1500 it had become a regular custom for the government of Worms to send annually a messenger to Frankfort with a felt hat as a symbol of petition for release of customhouse duties; the hat, like its humble forbear, the cap, thus being a token of liberty desired or demanded. The first regular hatters (or cappers) in the Middle Ages were apparently a guild in Nuremberg, beginning in the year 1360 under the name Filz-Kappenmacher—Felt-cap-makers. Twenty years later this business appeared in France and twenty-one years after that in Wurzburg, Bavaria.

For the further encouragement of English hatters—an odd remedy for their evil case—in the first third of the last century

the government proceeded to tax hats by making every seller take out a license. Then it decided to impose a stamp which was put on the inside of the crown where a maker's name is now found. If a man sold an unstamped hat, he was fined ten pounds. If he was proven to have forged a hat-stamp, the punishment was death. Law, in those good old days, was a veritable Reign of Terror. Naturally such legislation put a quietus on all improvements in the hat business for years, diminished the manufacture and sale of beaver hats in England and ruined the foreign and colonial trade.

The advent of the silk hat proper, according to Melton, was about the year 1822. Made of long-napped English silk on felt bodies, they were heavy and clumsy and so, he says, "did not take among the upper ten." In 1840, the present style of silk hats was brought from France and Lyons silk of the best quality was used. This at first upset the hat-

trade, for the workmen accustomed to beaver hat-making did not take kindly to the "Frenchified" method; but, after a while, they "caught on" and surpassed their teachers and the substitution of cotton bodies for felting was a great improvement, the cotton being so prepared that, although thin and light, it was as firm as thin board. Thus the hats were not only relieved of heaviness, but retained their shape.

English rulers, it will be noticed, have paid extraordinary attention from the start to the hat and hat-business. Some have even invented as well as given countenance to certain fashions. James I., who among other eccentricities tried by literary fulmination to blow all the tobacco smoke out of his Kingdom which Raleigh had caused there, entertained peculiar ideas about hats. Here are some of them which his unlucky courtiers had to don, or doff royal favor.

Eighteen years before this learned mur-

derer, James VI. of Scotland and I. of England, the worst king of the worst dynasty England was ever cursed with, ascended the throne, fashion in hats had rioted to the top notch of the fantastic.

The Elizabethan—or, more rightly, the Shakspearean Era—was an age of plumes;



STYLES BROUGHT FROM SCOTLAND BY JAMES I.

an age that, indeed, had no small reason to plume itself on its magnificent intellectual expansion. But Stubbs and other satirists were paving the way for James' clipping of head-gear by denouncing in unmeasured terms the bright and feathery follies of the time. "They are content," said Stubbs, "with no hat without a great

bunch of feathers of divers and sundry colors, peaking on the top of their heads not unlike, I dare say, Cockes combes, but as stemes of pride and ensigns of vanity; and these fluttering guiles and feathered flags of defiance to virtue are so advanced in England that every child hath them in his hat or cap. Many get a good living by dyeing them, and selling them, and not a few prove themselves more than fools in wearing of them."

The Revolution when Cromwell, the greatest of English rulers, took the helm, found and stamped out the feather fashions to a great extent.

The Puritan hat, a sufficiently hideous affair, was merely a high-crowned felt unblocked.

When the Restoration came and Charles II. began to shed the light of his ugly humorous phiz on England, the Merry Monarch issued a solemn pronunciamiento, laughing in his sleeve all the while, 'tis likely, as to the shape of hat and coat to

be worn by true Britishers till the day of Judgment; and his brother, James II., amid his general paucity of ideas, had some on hats. William III. not only rev-



COMMON PURITAN HAT AND THAT WORN BY ROBERT DEVEREUX, LORD ESSEX, COMMANDER OF PURITAN ARMY, FROM PORTRAIT.

olutionized James' deserted Kingdom, but the national head-gear, to boot. Still, he did not improve it much. On the eighty-first page, from Hogarth's immortal sketches, are some samples of the extraordinary three-cornered cocked-hats with gold-lace edges which gentlemen wore and

sweltered and swore under in the reigns of Queen Anne, George I. and George II. Are they not comical monstrosities? Who would seriously advise or advocate a return to such opera-bouffish trumpery? By 1760, however, one of the most uncouth styles, the broad flap, had vanished; the flaps having been turned upward triangularly. Did no one during this period recognize the grotesquery of these bespangled piles of decorative discomfort? Oh! yes; a facetious writer in 1762 gives the following pictorial comment. "Some have their hats open before like a churchspout or the tin scales they weigh flour in; some wear them rather sharper like the nose of a greyhound; and we can distinguish by the taste of the hat the mode of the wearer's mind. There is a military cock and the mercantile cock; and while the beaux of St. James' wear their hats under their arms, the beaux of the Moorfields-Mall (a region similar to our Bowery or Tenderloin) wear theirs diago-



nally over their left or right eye. Sailors wear their hats uniformly tucked down to the crown and look as if they carried a triangular apple pasty on their heads. I hope no person will think me disaffected; but, when I meet any of our new raised Infantry wearing the buttons of their hats bluff before and the trefoil white worsted shaking as they step, I cannot help thinking of French figure-dancers. A man with a hat larger than common represents the fable of two mountains in labor;* and the one edged with a gold binding belongs to the brothers of the turf. With Quakers 'tis a part of their faith not to wear a button or a loop tight up; their hats spread over their heads like a pent-house and darken the outward man to signify they have the inward light. Some wear their hats with the corners (which should come over their foreheads in a direct line), pointed into the air; these are the gawkies. Others do not above half cover their heads;

* Parturiunt montes; nascetur ridiculus mus.—Horace.

which is, indeed, owing to the shallowness of their crowns; but, between beaver and eyebrows, expose a piece of blank forehead which looks like a sand road on a surveyor's plan. Indeed, people should hide as much of the face under their hat as possible, for very few there are but what have done something for which they ought to be out of countenance."

Thirty years after this pleasant satiric



FRENCH REVOLU-
TION STYLE.



ROUND SLOUCH
OF FOX.



FRENCH REVOLU-
TION STYLE.

broadside a noticeable improvement of simplification was made. The wide, useless buttoned-up brims were pared down,

as can be noted in the illustration of the hat worn by the heroic General Wolfe.

Besides, the round slouch was introduced, and was worn by Pitt and Fox to whose particularly shabby hat William Austin, in his "Letters from London" published in 1803, has left a pleasant reference.

While the higher crowned hats became appreciably softened in outline and height, their smartness was still often emphasized by gold bands or tassels. Two of these, one with ribbon ornaments, were reproduced in the early days of the French Revolution and found a considerable but not lasting favor. Here, however, it is well for the serious investigator of human head-gear to note that a return was being unconsciously made to the Raleigh hat. The absurd superfluity of the brim has been docked; the feather has been plucked out; the cocks have been knocked off and the lace fringe has been relegated to limbo.

From now on the progress becomes clear and rapid, though with some slight diver-

gences into vapidty, such as the ludicrous angularity and exaggerated crescent of brim in the heyday of George IV., and the oddity, though not ugliness, of that style favored by the Earl of Harrington, to the simpler, but perhaps over-plain fashion of Anglesea and thus to the cotemporary summit of taste which eventually dominated them all and holds fairly firm to-day, the design of that inimitable dandy, Count d'Orsay.

About the same time that the hat got simplified in shape and color and denuded of tinsel ornamentation, a marked improvement in its material and manufacture took place. Fabric softer, equally strong, yet more flexible, began to be used for its body; its cover was woven more closely, of a richer pile; its dye was made more durable and capable of taking on a higher polish.

Reference has been made to the great interest in hats manifested by many English rulers and no history of the hat would

be complete or just which did not admirably chronicle the taste and practical judgment shown by that amiable gentleman who was the husband of Queen Victoria. The Prince Consort, as he was called, was a man of marked simplicity, though extreme elegance, in his tastes. In public, through the summer, he usually wore a hat of drab felt, for which he paid two guineas. In his gardens, however, he always wore a Panama, which in those days, according to the fineness of the plait, ranged in price from twenty-five to two hundred and fifty dollars.* But it was the fate of this Prince, who, as a foreign husband of the Queen, was peculiarly studious to avoid giving offence to the English by any appearance of interference in state affairs—it was the singular fate of this unusual Prince to raise a perfect storm in England—a tempest in a hat. This, too, by an act of real benevolence. Not

* Rich Mexican planters have been known to pay even as high as \$300 for a hat of this kind.

long after his transplantation into Hamlet's mad island of exile, the Prince had occasion to wear one of the military hats then in style of which an illustration is



GENERAL'S HAT, 1850.
WEIGHT 25 OUNCES.

given. This absurd and ugly thing had a uniform weight of twenty-five ounces. It is, as any one can see with half an eye, both heavy and clumsy. Taking a practical hatter into confidence and counsel, the Prince evolved a marked improvement which weighed only eleven and a half ounces. Lightness, smallness, comfort, were his aim. When this General's hat was finished, he submitted the matter

to the Duke of Wellington and Wellington, anxious to have a finger in this pie of military reform, and being of a very economical turn of mind (the accidental conqueror of Napoleon was a sad skin-flint) advised that, instead of the rich, gold loop, a bullion twist should be substituted and for the rich gold tassel of the Prince's design he offered a somewhat cheaper and



PRINCE ALBERT'S IMPROVEMENT
ON THE GENERAL'S HAT.

far less shapely one. The saving this involved was comparatively slight and in consideration of the high rank of the officers and the small number of hats required the Duke's improvement was absurd.

But the Prince had no choice save to accept the "amendment." The result was that the nation's jealousy was aroused and the press teemed with charges of insolent interference on the part of the foreigner and accusations of stinginess. But the storm at last subsided and the English,



OLD SHAKO.

coming to their senses, recognized the vast improvement which a foreigner of taste could make among them, if he had a chance, like the Prince Consort. He then set his mind toward simplifying the shako, which at that time weighed twenty-four

ounces. The one he proposed weighed ten and it was not adopted, but, as a sequel to his agitation, the French-shaped shako weighing seven and a half ounces came into use; not so handsome a hat as that of the Prince's invention and more "*foreign*," but possibly more serviceable and conven-



ALBERT SHAKO.

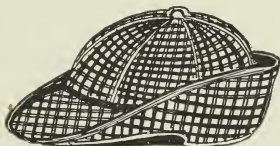


PRESENT SHAKO.

ient. This reformatory Prince also brought into fashion a very pretty and serviceable hat for deer-stalking, a favorite pastime of his. This was made of a misty mixture of shepherd's plaid, which resembles the black-and-white stone so common in the Highlands of Scotland and thus is calculated not to arrest the keen vision of the

deer and put him to flight. The shape is that of the Venetian period, the back brim turning down in wet weather and guarding the neck from rain.

Before parting with Victoria's excellent husband, it is impossible to refrain from



PRINCE ALBERT'S DEERSTALKING HAT.

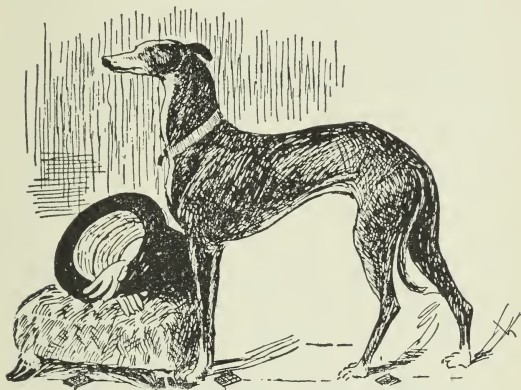
relating a delightful story of a famous hatter to whose book much is owing by the author of this, although it contains a few singular mistakes. Sir Edwin Landseer, the noted animal painter, was commissioned to do a life-size of the Prince's favorite dog, Eos.* It was decided to represent Eos as on guard over his master's hat and gloves reposing on a foot-stool or cushion. Sir Edwin, wishing to be realistic in

* A Greek word, signifying Dawn.

reproducing these stage-properties, sent to Mr. Melton for a hat of the Prince, which was furnished. Now listen to Mr. Melton's deep wail of advertising woe: "Sir Edwin introduced it into the picture, placing it easily on its side on a cushion and showing nearly half the inside of the lining. Had the hat luckily been placed just an inch more horizontally, the crown would have displayed my name as 'Hatter to his Royal Highness,' and thus rendered me an incalculable service, without prejudicing the picture in the least degree. But Fate, or the artistic fancy, decreed otherwise.* When I remind my readers that the engraving of this charming picture has had an almost unprecedented popularity, the importance of my suggestion can be readily estimated. . . . Assuredly, a great error, a most unartist-like proceeding and, indeed, an almost unpardonable neglect in our pre-Raphaelite age. I understand from good

* Mr. Melton evidently had a classic mind, for this recalls Virgil's famous *Dis aliter visum*.

authority that Mr. John Everett Millais, R. A. paints from a brick. Assuredly an artist should do justice to a "tile." And then to cap the climax, Mr. Melton criti-



EOS, FROM SIR EDWIN LANDSEER'S PICTURE.

cises Sir Edwin's counterfeit presentment of the Prince Consort's hat as disproportionate; "out of drawing"; and from a study of this famous picture one is inclined to admit that, in this point, the hatter has the great painter decidedly on the hip.

The pictured hat is really not quite true to the style of the original.

About fifty years ago, the sound sense of the Prince Consort having percolated at last into many English heads, his advanced ideas on the subject of hat ventilation were taken up by several hatters to the advantage of the community, and a man named Ellwood patented a double hat, with a space between the outer and inner body and with little perforations all around under the brim so as to produce a perfect and constant current of air. The sale of this cool hat, which had cost the hatter who exploited it a large sum to produce, "hung fire." What is new, however excellent, is apt to suffer from slowness of approval, and the greater the excellence, the smaller is often the amount of immediate appreciation. This applies to heads as well as hats. A Balzac spends years, nearly all his life, before he succeeds in achieving popular acceptance; while some trumpery novelist who treads in beaten tracks and

never has a single new idea lives in ease and imagines himself one of the Immortals.

The ventilator hat went slow until the exploiter conceived the happy plan of giving it a pompous, mysterious name. Calling in a scholarly friend to his aid, he concocted the word "Aleckephalés-Kepasteér," which is Greek and signifies "Head-protector from the heat of the Sun." The trick won. Men, seeing it advertised, became curious as to what such a hat could possibly be and also how to pronounce its outlandish title. They flocked to see it, and trying it on pronounced it a good thing. The Emperor of the French, Napoleon the Little, who having lived much in London was more than half an Englishman, took a great fancy to this new hat and gave it the stamp of his approval. Large quantities were shipped to India and there it soon evolved into the pith-hat or Indian helmet hat, which is at once comfortable and becoming in a tropical climate.

Not long after this invention, a Frenchman devised an umbrella-hat which provoked only ridicule in Paris. So he tried it on London through a friend in the hat-trade. This was a very simple affair; merely an exceedingly light umbrella with a handle about nine inches long which fitted with a screw into the centre of the crown of a stiff hat. In merely wet or bright weather it answered its purpose admirably, but if the day were also gusty, it was likely to cause amusement to spectators, for its wearer had to tack about like a human ship to prevent this umbrella taking flight along with the hat. Some, however, liked the hat for use in still fishing or for reading in the open air, and as recently as 1889 I saw one of these old patents in active service in this country.

It now comes in order to say a few words on the subject of ladies' hats which, about the same time, began to displace the bonnet; the bonnet being merely, in essence, a variation on the old cloth hood. It is

noteworthy that through all the fantastic changes in men's head-apparel woman has more than kept an equal pace with man. When men's hats were widest, and weightiest, women's were still more strange and towering. On succeeding pages are some illustrations of what ladies sailed under in the days of the Tudors and still earlier.



STYLE IN LAST DAYS
OF HOUSE OF YORK.

When a soberer taste began to show itself, the style affected by women became still plainer than that of the men. The straw-bonnet of our grandmothers even strained plainness at times almost to the

point of ugliness in shape, little relieved and, indeed, rather accentuated by the addition of lace and artificial flowers. In the forties, however, when the feather and plumes were things of the past in male costume, an English lady began to devote her attention and artistic skill to the composition of fancy hats in felt, straw and velvet ; and fine feathers for fine feminine featherless bipeds came with a bound—and boundlessly—into fashion. Every kind of bird from the dazzling, darting warbler or the modest low-flying sparrow to the tall flamingo or the soaring hawk, was made to contribute wings, tails, breasts, or, in the smaller species, whole bodies, stuffed and generally set in strained positions, to the adornment of lovely woman's head. Such was the bewildering variety of birds in use that a salesman in a hat-shop had to have not only a pretty good memory, but no small ornithological knowledge, in order to tell a customer just what kind of bird or feather she was buying on her hat.

An amusing story is told of this time. A lady of title, one of the sort who are always on the lookout for monstrosities in the way of fashion, entered a hatter's and desired to be shown a hat which was unique and could not possibly be duplicated by any other woman. A monster with a wondrously dyed and flaunting feather was brought forth. She greatly admired it and inquired the price. "Fifty pounds." Rich as the lady was, it staggered her a little and she expressed surprise; whereupon the saleswoman began to expatiate on the *rarity* of the feather as offering a happy medium of convincing the customer of its value; but not being a very fluent orator the saleswoman got confused and commenced to stammer and flush. The proprietor, noticing this, flew to the rescue and gracefully ousting his subordinate, while taking the cue as to rarity, began to explain that there wasn't another feather like it in all England and might never be again for many years, inasmuch as the

bird was one of the scarcest in the world and on account of its peculiar habits almost as impossible to shoot as an American loon. "But what *is* this feather and what's the bird's name?" suddenly queried the lady. "Madam," he said, completely at his wit's end, for he hardly knew a hawk from a hernshaw, when it came to the pinch, "Madam," he repeated, rolling up his eyes and lowering his oily voice to an impressive stage-whisper, as if the secret were being dragged out of him, "*This is the wing of a diving peacock.*" Delighted and astonished, the dame apologized for her ignorance and took the hat at once.

While in the vein anecdotal concerning English hatters, one is tempted to refer to the system of long accounts with fashionable customers which used to prevail in England and to some extent still obtains. Tradesmen, especially in the hat-trade, were heavily handicapped by this usage. To press for a bill meant often to give great offence. Months, years frequently,

rolled by with large bills apparently no nearer to settlement than when contracted. An old joke from Punch illustrates this. "I must withdraw my patronage from



HORNÉD HEADDRESS. TIME OF HENRY IV.

Dunning," says young Frank Dash. "Why, what has he done, Frank?" Frank's brother asks, "Oh! he has *assumed a hostile attitude: he has actually asked for his money.*" Indeed, so fearful were some tradesmen of angering the gentry that, after a while, they would go through the form of bankruptcy so the

sums due could be collected without any apparent application on their part; and there was one firm which made a practice of only sending in accounts to dead men, *i. e.*, to the executors of its debtors' estates. Melton tells a delicious anecdote of one London gentleman's method of settling. To a patron who, he supposed, would pay him at least once a year, he sent a bill at Christmas. No heed being paid to this, at Easter the latter sent a clerk with a duplicate. My lord received the humble envoy politely; but, pointing to his desk, expressed some irritation at Melton's "impropriety" in expecting him to "disturb the regularity of his file." "When my accounts reach the top of that," he said, blandly, "I begin to pay them off in regular order by easy stages so as not to weary myself in well-doing. If a bill comes in early, you see, it must get paid late, for it is low down on the file. This too, fulfills the Scripture that the last shall be first and the first last."

The clerk, duly impressed by such holy business methods on the part of a noble, cringed away. It was another year before the hatter received his money, from which it may be inferred that the customer had a pretty long file—and was a pretty keen one.

The early mention of the hat in our literature is noticeable. Chaucer has been cited, but even before him in the old poem "Pier's Ploughman" there is reference to a merchant wearing a hat. Shakspeare is particularly copious in allusions to hats. Master Slender in "The Merry Wives of Windsor" swears by his hat: a good proof in what high esteem or reverence the hat was then held. Claudio in "Much Ado About Nothing" is noted for "brushing his hat o' mornings" which allows a fair inference that beaver was then in wear or coming into fashion. Beatrice in the same play remarks: "He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat: it ever changes with the next block," which in-

dicates how capricious was fashion in that day. In "All's Well That Ends Well" the Clown, describing the advent of Bertram and his retinue, exclaims "Faith, there's a dozen of them, with delicate fine hats and most courteous feathers which bow and nod at every man." Grumio in "Taming of the Shrew" refers to a servant's hat; Vincentio alludes to a copatain* hat; Biondello describes Petruchio's servant as wearing "a old hat and the humor of forty fancies pricked in it for a feather."

That jewels as well as feathers were disported in men's hats, when Shakspeare lived, appears from the Third Lord in "Timon of Athens" who says: "He gave me a jewel the other day and now he has brat it out of my hat." Coriolanus is made by Shakspeare to speak of taking his hat off in order to curry favor with the mob; but this is probably a mistake historical on the part of the poet, since a Roman of the time, stamp and age of

* Means high-raised or pointed.

Coriolanus would not be likely to have worn a hat. Mrs. Page in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," when urging Falstaff to escape, bids him put on a hat, a muffler



WHAT A MERRY WIFE OF
WINDSOR MAY HAVE WORN.

and kerchief, and there is also reference in this play to a "thrummed" hat which was a shaggy sort of wool cap, worn by common people and covered with the ends of yarn called thrums. Ophelia, when "mad as a hatter" sings —

"How should I your true love know
From another one ?
By his cockle-hat and staff
And his sandal shoon."

This was probably a ditty old in Shakspeare's time and transplanted by him into the play as a piece of nature; for the reference is to days when persons went on religious pilgrimages and wore a cockle or shell in the hat as a sign of their errand. That the ancient Britons wore no hats, except when going into battle, when they wore nothing else, seems to be a well established fact; and that the ancient Greeks wore hats, besides the helmet, which is a kind of a hat, appears clear from the "Works and Days" of Hesiod, a poem written for "the agricultural interest." Hesiod, describing the proper dress for a farmer in raw weather, says,

"Then for the head a pylon, wrought with care,
Both ears enclosing cautiously prepare;
For piercing are the morning winds that blow
From the chill north and drive the hosts of snow."

Strutt,* an authority on ancient costumes, speaks of the pylon, or pileus of the Romans, as a woollen cap sometimes worn

*Strutt's "Ancient Habits," Introduction, p. 95.

as a lining to the helmet. We have no absolutely overwhelming proof that the Greeks had discovered the art of felting much before the Christian Era; but the likelihood is large that the brimmed hat or petasus which Alexander the Great favored and made fashionable for ages among Greek and Roman youth, was of felt; and Pliny who flourished in the first century of Christianity which he reviled as "an extravagant superstition" has a minute account of the process of felting which renders it evident that the attribution of the invention to St. Clemens must be taken very largely on faith; if, indeed, at all seriously. To be sure, it may have lapsed, may have become a dead art, to be revived by the sensible, practical saint who may have felt that a multitude of sins might need to be covered by a good stout hat as well as by charity. Evidently the hat was not in common use among the Romans, was not countenanced by custom and was, perhaps, regarded as

tending to effeminacy or dudishness; for it is of record that Caligula by a special edict only let people wear the petasus at the theatre to shade their eyes from the sun. But the ancients wore a much more primitive hat than the pilon or pileus of which an illustration on page nine, taken from Choul's *Castramen des Anciens Romans*, gives an idea. This—Cudo it was called—was made of the undressed skin of a wild animal; very likely among the early Romans of wolf-skin, since the wolf was their national emblematic animal, as the lion is England's, and the eagle ours. Probably the home-made fur hats or caps of our western trappers tally closely with this early Roman type. In the sculptures on Trajan's Pillar, some of the Roman soldiers are figured as wearing the whole skin of an animal, the face glimpsing between the upper and lower jaws and the body skin hanging down over the back. Catlin's drawings of our American Indians exhibit a similar thing, the braves wearing

the hide and horns of the buffalo. The Roman *galea* was originally a helmet hat made of hide, fitting more or less closely round the skull with slits for the eyes and sometimes with a flap covering the front of the nose. The Greek helmet was generally made of dog-skin at first, as the name of it shows, but, afterward, among both races, it was made wholly of iron or brass.

The petasus, of which an illustration on page nine taken from an antique vase and representing a Greek soldier gives a good average idea, varied greatly in shape; perhaps, according to the occupation of the wearer.

Frequently it was a mere skullcap with a narrow, but stiff, brim. Sometimes the brim was very large and presumably more flexible, corresponding to the Spanish or southern slouch. The petasus is worn still by husbandmen in Greece and Asia Minor. Roughly speaking, it may be said to have been the hat of shepherds, travelers and hunters. Three kinds of petasus are men-

tioned by ancient authors, the Arcadian, (farmers' or shepherds') the Thessalian (hunters' probably) and the Laconian, which may have been the more cosmopolitan or travelers' kind; but one has no present means of knowing the exact differences of these hats.

The *causia*, classifiable as a *petasus* of rank, since it was the hat affected by Macedonian Kings, and by nobles with regal permission, generally was ribboned or filleted, but not always, as the illustration on page eleven shows.

The brim of this turned up, instead of down, and that it must have been composed of a stiff fabric, some sort of felt, seems beyond question. This is the hat Alexander wore and which the Roman dude Emperor, Caracalla, assumed, under an illusion that he was a second Alexander, or Alexander himself reincarnate. The mark in the top of this suggests that, with the ancients, the idea of ventilation was just as dominant as it was in the wise

head of Queen Victoria's husband. Strabo writing about 15 A. D. refers to the hats of the Persians as "felt-made and like a tower." The Persian hat to-day is the same. The ancient Lycians wore hats with feathers, not unlike those current in the days of Louis XIV. Rome's ancient



RICHLY EMBROIDERED COWL-SHAPED
FEMININE HEADDRESS OF 16TH CENTURY.

priesthood—it is noted among the Institutions of Numa—wore a kind which was very likely the progenitor of the bishop's mitre. It was called the apex; a hat coming to a point, stiff and bodied, either

of hide or felt. Sacredness attached to this hat as to the scarlet crown on the Cardinal. Sulpicius was degraded from the priestly rank because his apex fell off, while he was offering a sacrifice.

Remains now to consider an ancient head-covering which has persisted with little or no change of form to modern times. The cucullus (cowl), was worn by slaves, and by shepherds, who were generally slaves, as many farmers are to-day of the mercantile or moneyed classes. This humble headgear was adopted by the lowest order of Christian priests or monks,* supposedly in order to identify them with the common people and in token of that practical brotherhood of man which the Greatest of Masters sought to preach and teach by shining example.

Did Christ wear a hat? The question is proposed with the greatest reverence,

*The old proverb, "Cucullus non facit monachum" for "the cowl makes not the monk" occurs to memory here.

and not in any light or reckless way, for the sake of sensation. Unquestionably the Jews, living in a tropical country, wore something of the sort and we have the testimony of Daniel to that effect. But there is no mention in the New Testament of this thing and is it not a just inference that, according to the general Roman custom—rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's—and disdainful of what to Him would have been a superfluity, He walked bare-headed, as bare-souled, among men?

Sculpture and painting in the main have represented the ancients or, more exactly, the notable figures among them, as uncovered; but it would be a grave mistake to rely too strongly on these representations as embodiments of absolute historic truth. It is likely that artists of yore, like those of modern times, generally took pains to free their subjects as much as possible from conventional trammels of costume. Why, there used to be a statue

of Washington at the Capitol, which not only imaged the father of his country bare-headed, but bare-backed and bare-legged. Suppose our civilization should lapse into chaos, like that of Greece and Rome, as must all systems of government founded on inequality or superstructured with injustice; and suppose amid America's ruins scholars and explorers of a new race, delving with curiosity, should find only that half-dressed statue of Washington, all others having been mutilated by Time almost beyond guesswork. Might there not be many then who would regard this as affording proof that in the morning twilight, the mythologic part of American history, the men went about dressed or *undressed* in Washingtonian fashion? Indeed, some modern writers on costume with far less evidence have gravely argued that the Greeks and Romans in the heroic ages wore no hats or caps and even went to battle unhelmeted. This, as has been seen, is a gross blunder; but it does

appear that at the dawn of Christianity the hat was not, in the heyday of the Roman Empire, a universal piece of apparel even among the gentry. It may then be fairly inferred that in the provinces of Rome, unless they were tropical or sub-tropical, the hat did not figure to any large extent. In his amusing "Essay on Hats" Leigh Hunt, who bore the distinction of wearing about the worst hats of any man of letters in his time, speaks of a famous Spanish picture of the Virgin Mary, wherein she says to a Jewish gentleman who has politely doffed his hat: "Cousin, be covered!" But Raphael and the other great Masters who have dealt with scriptural scenes do not represent Christ or any of the apostles as wearing hats.

It is highly interesting to compare the costumes of different races, and especially in the matter of headgear. Take for example that figure of a Briton in a hooded cloak, page twenty-one, at the time when

Cæsar seized the "tight little, right little island." Such hooded cloaks are not uncommon to-day among women of cold countries and I have seen in the last ten years at least a dozen traveling Britons with an abbreviated costume somewhat similar; the hood lying back on the back till rain should call it into use. Nor was it an ungraceful phenomenon of reverting fancy in fashion.

Here, again, is the separate hat or cap on the opposite page worn as late as the year 1100 in many parts of England, this particular specimen having been copied by Fairholt from a manuscript of the eleventh century. Compare this with the classic helmet hat* of Paris whose elopement with Helen caused the fall of Troy, and note the remarkable similarity.

And on page twenty-one is a hat whose replica as to shape can be seen almost any day in the Orient. This was taken from a manuscript of the reign of Henry I. of

* From Hope's "Costume of the Ancients."

England—and seems, as to crown, to have been woven, or plaited, from strips of cloth, stiffened possibly by some mucilaginous preparation. A twelfth century manuscript in the Cambridge Library gives us



11TH CENTURY.



PHRYGIAN CAP B. C.

the hats on page twenty-five worn by the middle classes on which I have previously commented as hints of our derby and those on page sixty-five are the styles that appertained to the nobility or higher clergy of the fifteenth century.

The tall single feather in one of these emphasizes the idea: the greater the man, the taller his hat; and it seems an al-

most universal characteristic of the human peacock,* male as well as female, to stick a feather in the hat, cap or hair. Our Indian sticks it in the hair. Originally, among savages, it may not have been adopted as a mere decoration; but from a superstition that the warrior thus arrayed would acquire some of the swiftness of the bird, just as some savages, not otherwise cannibals, eat the hearts of their bravest opponents under a fancy of thus gaining additional courage. Or else in the mind of primitive man the killing of some big bird was regarded as a great achievement of valor or of skill and so the wearing of its feathers came to denote an honorable deed. Thus possibly rose the common proverb—one of the oldest known to man—"a feather in one's cap."

* Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Stetson has a very amusing poem on this topic which closes somewhat thus:

Vanity's wide as the world is wide.

Feminine Vanity? O! ye men,

Look at the peacock in his pride!

Is it a hen?

As Genin, a famous New York hatter half a century ago, wittily said, "it is a great feather in the cap of the present generation that it wears no feathers in its cap." Only women, some soldiers, and a few barbarians cling to this antique fashion, and the decimation of our beautiful and valuable birds for the purpose of supplying feminine vanity in this way



MIDDLE OF 18TH CENTURY.

has of recent years led to a strong counter-movement, or crusade against fuss and feathers, which bids fair to be soon successful. But how tremendous is the force

of fashion—how slow the process of evolution—how long delayed, like “hope deferred,” the triumph of simplicity in taste!

Let us give an historic illustration of this in the way of feminine headgear. On pages ninety-seven and one hundred and one are two of the horrid headdresses worn by ladies in the York and Lancaster period of England and elsewhere in Europe preceding that time. Could anything be more monstrous? Against these towers of vanity the thunderbolts of the clergy, the shafts of the satirist, the slings and flings of husbands, brothers and fathers were for ages launched in vain. In face of all attack the women kept on wearing these extinguishers of grace and belittlers of beauty till the sixteenth century, when they reached a pitch of extravagance, a top-heaviness of splendor, beyond the which was no going. Then, indeed, a reaction set in and feminine hats have never since *risen* and *spread* to such mad, Babel-

tower dimensions; though, about 1750, there was a menace of return to the old appalling absurdities. Even the mighty Catholic Church was worsted in this battle against Vanity raised to the summit of Insanity. The good Bishop of Paris in the fourteenth century—one of the most enlightened of churchmen—undertook to head a crusade against these abominations. He not only denounced them from his pulpit, but he offered a ten days' pardon of sins to all who would cry out and fight against them. But Fashion foiled him; the milliners of Paris triumphed over him; and the muslin steeple, on page sixty-nine, copied from the old illustrated French Romance "Comte d'Artois" still flourished in air, when the good Bishop yielded up his reformer-breath.

Proof of the radical persistence of a fashion lies in the fact that a headdress, nearly as top-heavy and absurd as the one cited, continued to be worn by the peasant women of Normandy as late as

1850, at which date, travelers aver, the streets of Havre were spotted by them and they were not uncommon even in Rouen and Paris itself. But some hats of taste were worn in the fourteenth century in France.

Here is one from the romance just quoted, which is rather pretty; and especially noticeable, evolutionally, from the suggestion of likeness in shape to our modern beaver. Hats in the same general class (a rough and ready grouping is all that a science of manufactured things can safely attempt) are plentiful in the exquisitely illustrated manuscripts of this period. Two examples, from a "Chronicle of England" composed for Edward IV., will suffice. They can be found on page sixty-five and are so intrinsically interesting that I have referred to them, I think, twice before.

These in the illustrated manuscript are depicted of a bright, staring yellow as a whole with brilliant blue trimmings.

What the great Italian painter, Favretto, would call “feste di colore” *feasts of color*, they must have been in themselves, but think how jarring they would be on a head of profuse blond hair—and men wore



BLOCKED HAT OF FRANCE AND FLANDERS,
RALEIGH'S TIME. FROM OLD FRENCH
ROMANCE. 'COMTE D'ARTOIS.'

their hair long in those days. Why these particular hats have been from time immemorial (almost) assumed by artists as

the correct headgear for wizards and witches is a mystery. But even now in children's picture books—Mother Goose for witness—and on the stage this odd convention prevails. The witches in *Macbeth* are generally thus hatted.

In the same illuminated "Chronicles of England" are figures of men wearing a close round green (velvet or sarcenet?) cap with long lappets falling over the shoulders and down the back. These bands, black in color, and probably of rough silk, occasionally hung down to the heels. Perhaps, they were a special class-distinction.

The illustration on page ninety-seven is of a lady of fashion in the last days of the House of York. This curious headdress was made of black velvet or silk, studded with gold and bestuck with jewels. The poets of that time admired hugely these huge fantasticalities, it seems, for their writings abound in references to such things. Idleness, one of the characters in "The Romance of the Rose," is depicted wearing

“fine orfraies,” an ornament of gold, and

“A chaplet so serenely on
* Ne never waivéd mail upon,
And fair abové that chaplét
A rosé garland had she set.”

From this it is evident that not content with her tower of filagree the lady had a chaplet of lace and over and above that a wreath of roses.

On page one hundred and one is a specimen of the hornéd headdresses of the dames in the reign of Henry IV. which made a lady look like a kind of enhaloed and beatified cow.

With the coming to the throne of Henry VII., a monarch who set a fashion of sobriety and economy of living, then a novelty in England, for a while the hats worn by gentlemen were, as a rule, much more convenient and at the same time more truly picturesque. But still the feather appealed to dandies and some of the “men

* The double negative, merely for purpose of emphasis, appears in Early English just as in Greek.

about town " looked more like flaunting flamingoes than sensible creatures.

In the following reign (Henry VIII.) the portraits of that bluff old Bluebeard's various wives, painted by the Dutch artist, Hans Holbein, show as hideous hats or headdresses as could easily be imagined. Anne Boleyn's is the only one of the group which approaches grace or fitness. In the reign of Elizabeth, to which attention has been previously directed for other points, a button-cap for countrymen came into vogue which, doubtless, in its management of the flaps gave suggestion for the buttoning up of some of the cocked-hats of the eighteenth century. But, preceding Elizabeth's reign a queer little pan-cake looking cap (worn as late as 1850 by the Blue Coat Boys of London) caught the popular fancy. It was even worn by the young King, Edward VI., and has been known to fame as the "muffin-cap." * A

* The great merchant, Sir Thomas Gresham, who founded the London Exchange, always wore this cap.

picture extant shows him in this rig, embellished, however, with a tassel. This kind of cap is still made, and worn in England by the very young or at times by



AGE OF ELIZABETH.

FLATHEAD FOR MAN, SAME CENTURY.

elders who wish to appear jaunty and juvenile.

The page of illustration, thirty-three, shows collectively the general fashions that obtained in the sixteenth century. They are derived from Repton's "Tapestries" and while, perhaps, exaggerated in some details correspond sufficiently well with

portraits and pictures of that century to be accepted as typical. Note how much more sensible the women's hats had become, when the greatest of English women sovereigns, Queen Bess, was on the throne. Halcyon days for hatters one writer calls this reign, and intimates that nobles and men of fashion purchased a new hat every other day. These were chiefly made of velvet, probably of beaver for the nobles and a little later still felt* rose in estimation even for fine hats.

In the reign of James I. the felt-makers of London secured an act of incorporation. The Puritan hat, severe and sugar-loafish, has already been considered, but on page seventy-nine is one from a full-length portrait of Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex "Lord General of the Army." The feather presumably is on account of his military

*Stowe says that felt was made in England during the reign of Henry VIII. by Dutchmen and Spaniards. It was worn in England by Edward III., according to Green's History and Froissart's Chronicle; but, doubtless this was the exception, not the rule.

rank: otherwise the hat is Puritan, but doubtless of beaver.

When Charles II. regained his throne, one of the first "reforms" he and his dissolute gang instituted was the cutting down of the "steeple-crown" hats, as they were nicknamed, and the smothering of



WHEN CHARLES II. WAS KING.

the brims with plumes once more. The women in that reign of riot and ribaldry wore hats almost exactly like those of their lords. This was a French taste which Charles endeavored to impart to his people, even going so far as to decree

it in Council in 1664. In 1660 Louis XIV., according to a print representing a meeting between his Magnificence and Philip IV., of Spain, held in hand the kind of hat—an arm-hat doubtless—depicted on page fifty-three.

The cocked-hat has been discussed pretty fully, but one interesting thing remains to be told of it. Sign and symbol of aristocracy, it was particularly antagonized by the French Revolution, though it was even then a decaying fashion. But Emperor Paul of Russia, because French Republicans hated it, conceived almost an adoration for it and forbade his subjects to wear a round hat under penalty first of the knout and second of a visit to Siberia.

Thus, again, as in the case of the Netherlands which, when Spain's yoke was thrown off, assumed a certain kind of hat as the token of freedom and made it a national emblem, the sort of hat in the last century favored by France was regarded as the horrible mark of Republican

institutions. Still, though the cocked-hat with its gold or silver lace, its buckles and rosettes, was nearing its fall from all heads save those of soldiers and flunkies toward the close of the last century, and a breeze of purer, simpler taste was beginning to blow from France over England, some ladies of fashion made a desperate endeavor and for a few years succeeded in rendering feminine hats almost as ridiculously heavy, high and cumbrous as they had ever been.

The author of the New Bath Guide in 1776 has this humorous description and warning to a young lady that, if her haystack of a hat catches fire from some of the candles or flambeaux in the Bath Assembly Rooms, a conflagration of Cupids may result.

A cap like a hat
 (Which was once a cravat)
 Part gracefully platted and pinned is;
 Part, stuck upon gauze,
 Resembles macaws
 And all the fine birds of the Indies.

But above all the rest
A bold Amazon's crest
Waves nodding from shoulder to shoulder,
At once to surprise
And to ravish all eyes ;
To frighten and charm the beholder.

In short, head and feather,
And wig altogether,
With wonder and joy would delight ye ;
Like the picture I've seen
Of th' adorable queen
Of the beautiful, blest Otaheite.

Yet Miss at the rooms
Must beware of her plumes,
For if Vulcan * her feather embraces,
Like poor Lady Laycock,
She'll burn like a haycock —
And roast all the Loves and the Graces.

Hat-making in America was a branch of industry which early attracted the attention of the settlers in colonial days and provoked the jealousy of the English makers which resulted in several abortive attempts on their part to procure Parliamentary interference and check the

* God of Forge and Fire, put by a figure of speech common in the last century for fire itself.



growth of the industry. The extent to which the stepmother country wished to carry this petty tyranny of prevention seems hardly believable nowadays, when one sees how England encourages in all her colonial possessions the manufacture of any and every thing. Even the great Lord Chatham, who nobly opposed the final physical oppression of the colonies at the time of the Revolution, had earlier declared that Americans should not be permitted to manufacture "the nail to a horseshoe." So intense was the then narrow view of colonial rights.

After the achievement of our Independence we were still regarded as a set of crude barbarians not really capable of doing much fine hat-work, or head-work, though it was felt by England that we would fight "at the drop of the hat," and this gained for us a grudging respect. Not long after the war of 1812 in which we were compelled to thrash the Britons into still greater respect and keep them from

stealing our sailors on the high seas, manufacturing began to "look up" somewhat in the northern part of this country and among others the business of hat-making reared its head proudly. Just as there were kings before Agamemnon, there were good hatters in the United States before those who are flourishing now and some of the hats made in General Jackson's glorious day, though not remarkable for beauty, perhaps, were marvels of fine workmanship. Old Hickory, who in youth had worn a cocked-hat, sensibly lent the light of his countenance and the vast force of his example to the beaver or chimney-pot, as it was disrespectfully called, and that, with the southern slouch, held sway. Toward the middle of this century American hats began to be known in Europe for the excellence of their make. A few years before an impudent English critic had sneeringly asked: "Who reads an American book?" and probably the contemptuous question "Who

wears an American hat ? ” may have been asked among the traders. We have changed all that.

Hitherto we have been considering chiefly the hats made of felt or pelt ; but the development of the straw hat is of equal interest. Straw for many centuries has been used in tropical countries for the production of head-coverings and in southern Italy it was plaited with rare skill, often in divers colors, about three centuries ago. Tuscany was the principal seat of this industry and the city of Leghorn was particularly noted for the beauty of its work in straw. To this day the Leghorn hat survives. These art-works of the early Italian Masters were made from a short and small wheat grown for this purpose on the Arno and the Italian hat stole its way into favor, at last, all over Europe. Only in the last century, however, did it begin to triumph over the insular prejudice and congenital slowness of the English race ; but once having gained a foothold—

or a headhold—there, the straw-hat industry began to flourish in Great Britain. At first the Italian straw was imported and the Italian method of plaiting followed in which thirteen unsplit straws were used, seven turned to one side and six to the other. Thus a flat, broad plait is produced which can be continued to any desired length. This, coiled up in large circular plats, is threaded loosely together and in that shape is ready for exportation. But the English before long began to employ their own grasses for the same purpose and a wheat which grew on the chalky soil of Dunstable was discovered to be so fine that Dunstable hats became famous. An extension of this industry ensued in the counties of Bedford, Hertford, and Buckingham particularly, and by the middle of this century over fifty thousand persons were there engaged in straw hat-making with a yearly return of nearly five million dollars.

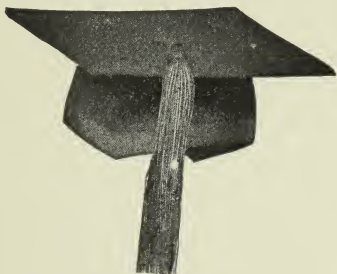
The old Italian method of course, was

entirely superseded. By the new process the best and whitest straws cut into equal lengths were subjected to fumes of burning sulphur, which bleached them to uniform tint and then each one was divided into several strips by a wire with several cutting edges passed up through the straw. Then the strips, after being softened in water, were ready for plaiting and as fast as the plait was made they flattened it by pressure between wooden rollers. Next, in order to form the hat, they wound it spirally over a block, overlapping the edges and sewing the coils together.

It is noticeable, indeed I have often heard it remarked by persons not particularly interested in the hat-business, how from year to year the straw hat seems to gain a fineness of finish in the point of manufacture and in attractiveness of general appearance on the heads of wearers. This is really true likewise in regard to other hats, but is not quite so self-evident. It stands to reason that it should be thus,

particularly in a country like our own, where the inventive faculty of the people is very fertile and where competition between makers is very keen ; for as yet there is no Hat-Trust and little likelihood of such a thing for many years to come.

On the other hand, while the American



THE COLLEGE MORTAR-BOARD,
WORN NOW BY BOTH SEXES.

people make and in large numbers wear the very best hats in the world, it must be admitted that a vast amount of worthless hats appears also to be bought by the multitude. Mere cheapness, of course, always makes a potent appeal to average human

nature. Men, even when fairly well-to-do and able to afford the best—which is the cheapest in the end—are frequently tempted into purchasing a hat which will not hold its form, color or freshness thirty days; while by paying twice as much they could get a first-rate article which with fair care would last for months: in fact, many first-rate hats last and look well more than one season.

Several men about town make a practice of following substantially the example set by Count d'Orsay in the early part of this century: that is, they lay in a supply of a variety of styles and they never wear any hat more than a fortnight consecutively. Thus their hats always look fresh and by replenishing from time to time with some new style in the most stylish kind they are constantly up with the fashions. It has been said on good authority that very good razors will often sharpen themselves, if after considerable use they are laid away to rest. Whether this is a fact or not I

cannot say from personal experience, but I am convinced that a somewhat similar phenomenon is true as regards hats. Like human beings they seem to need a day off, now and then; and to keep several and give them all vacations from active service tends to a real economy as well as to a continuous elegance in one's personal appearance.

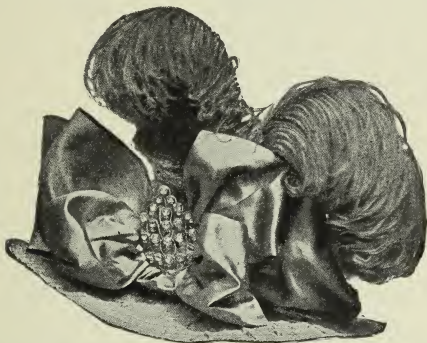
I have now arrived nearly at the completion of the pleasant task I set myself last summer in the composition of this little book; and I trust it will not be deemed egotistical or out of place, if I say a few words, in closing, about its plan and purpose. My aim was not to produce a *vade mecum* of present fashions or to put anything before the public eye that should savor in the least of an advertisement of my business or of myself as a manufacturer and expert.

The vast and varied press of the country presents legitimate channels for advertising a man's goods and a man's goods, if they be

good goods, must also in the long run advertise themselves. I believe heartily in using the great newspaper channels of communicating with the public, even after one's business has grown to great size, and I think nearly all great merchants will subscribe to this opinion. So I have refrained from putting anything in this book which might appear to lead a reader to the conviction that a Knox hat is the *summum bonum*, the final flower of taste, the perfect evolution of utility, beauty and fitness in this important branch of human industry.

I have even avoided presenting any examples of modern masculine styles in the illustrations lest it should be fancied that I took them from my stock to impress by suggestion the public. The few specimens of modern feminine hats with which I have sought to embellish these closing pages were chosen by me in the same way, not from hats I make, but from foreign makes which I handle to some extent for

some customers whose fancy leads them to desire occasionally that which bears the mark of Paris or London in preference to that frequently far superior article made



SOMETHING VERY MODERN IN FEMININE HEADGEAR.

in America and made by more than one hatter of real note and authority.

I look forward to the day when the words, "Made in America," will not, like the stamp "Made in Germany" on any article, carry a suggestion of mere cheapness, but an absolute conviction that the article, whether a hat, a shoe, or a pen, is

of immensely superior quality, resulting from a combination of the most highly skilled and best-paid labor with the choicest taste, and commanding everywhere and always, as it should, a just price: in fine, every American product should be a victory of true values.

Having stated thus my general purpose, let me give a brief outline of the plan of this book. I have sought to group in a form easy to grasp the essential details of the development of this industry; to show how, with certain gaps (which a future historian may be able to fill up with materials not yet accessible, but possibly discoverable) there has been a steady evolution toward the present leading styles among civilized men; and how even some extravagant fashions which threatened, by dint of long reign, to become fixed, have been really but exceptional or transitional—mere birds of passage. By copious admixture of anecdote derived from many sources I have tried to make this topic



GOLFING HAT AND CAPE, IMPORTED.

entertaining to the general reader as well as to members of my own craft. Whether I have succeeded or not is for the public and the critics to say.

In conclusion, it is only proper to acknowledge my large indebtedness, not only to other men's casual writings on this theme, but to several literary gentlemen, Messrs. John B. Carlton, Charles Frederic Stansbury and George Bell, Esquire, of The New York Bar and the Bell Publishing Company, for many corrections in the text and some re-arrangements of the original matter.

If this little book is found instructive and entertaining, as I hope it will be, I shall be tempted to compose another dealing with all the interesting details of the art of hat-manufacturing as practiced by other hatters and myself, with illustrations from life of the work-women and workmen in the greatest hat-factory of the world and of others where special branches of the industry are flourishing; and bear-

ing fruit of good wages for thousands of people.

In this hope and ambition I now dedicate this book to the Hatters of the United States, wishing that the day may soon arrive, when they shall "hat" the world—surely, no unreasonable expectation, since America already heads it.

E. M. K.

